(a) whether Government is aware that 800 year old historical monument known as Lal Mahal or Red Palace has been demolished by a private builder in Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken any action in this regard;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether it is a fact that still there are around seventy thousand buildings and monuments which are not in the list of protected monuments; and

(f) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Lal Mahal located in the west of Nizamuddin, New Delhi, is a 13th century monument. It is not declared as a monument of national importance. In October, 2008, unauthorized activity was noticed and a report was immediately lodged by the Archaeological Survey of India with the local police. A show cause notice was also issued to the offenders under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and Rules, 1959. The Delhi Government has also been requested to direct the concerned agencies to take necessary steps to prevent damage to the heritage structure.

(e) and (f) It is not possible to indicate the accurate number of unprotected monuments/sites. The Government has set up a National Mission for Monuments and Antiquities to create a national database of monuments.

Unproctected heritage sites

1587. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that many of the monuments and heritage sites remain unprotected for the past many years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether Government have any proposal to set up National Heritage Sites Commission to look into the issue;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) by when it would be set up?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) It is not possible at present to give accurate details of unprotected monuments/sites. The Government has set up a National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities to create a national database for all monuments/sites.

(c) to (e) The National Heritage Sites Commission Bill is under consideration of the Government.

Misuse of protected sites

1588. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is also looking into activities like film shooting misuse of protected sites, holding functions/parties near sites under Archaeological Survey of India purview;

(b) if so, whether the existing rules are adequate in respect of keeping strict vigilance upon visitors, who deface monuments in any way, as generally each such protected monument has tell-tale signs of such defacements;

(c) whether it is due to indifferent attitude of the ASI staff, or their connivance; and

(d) the details of steps being taken to achieve zero-tolerance for such undesirable acts?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Grant of permissions for filming operations and holding of cultural events/functions within the limits of centrally protected monuments are considered by the Archaeological Survey of India under the provisions of Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites & Remains Act, 1958, Rules, 1959, and guidelines.

(b) to (d) The staff posted at the monuments/sites declared as of national importance maintain vigilance to detect acts of defacement and vandalism in the monuments. In addition to the regular watch and ward staff, private security guards, State police and CISF have also been deployed for the safety and security of selected monuments. Penalty clauses exist in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act in which such acts are punishable by imprisonment of 3 months or with a fine of Rs.5000/- or both.

Memorial of Late Shri Morarjibhai Desai

1589. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of India has received a proposal from the State Government of Gujarat for acquiring the land from Sabarmati Ashram Gaushala Trust, Ahmedabad, as the possession of the land is with CPWD, to develop suitable memorial on the Samadhi of late Shri Morarjibhai Desai;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government of India on the proposal of Government of Gujarat; and

(c) the present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The land for the Memorial was given by the Sabarmati Ashram Gaushala Trust, Ahmedabad without any cost. A memorial of Shri Morarji Desai named 'Abhay Ghat' has been constructed at the bank of river Sabarmati. The construction work started in July, 1997 and was completed in March, 1999. The memorial is being maintained by CPWD. As such there is no question of acquiring the land on payment of its cost, at this stage. The Government of Gujarat has been informed accordingly.

As there is no scheme under which this could be considered at this late stage, it is not possible to acquire the land on payment of the cost of the land.